

What is claimed is:

1. A client apparatus for preparing streaming media received over a non-deterministic delay network for playback or distribution which comprises:
 - a buffer which stores data corresponding to the streaming media;
 - 5 a time-scale modification system that time-scale modifies data output from the buffer at a time-scale modification playback rate;
 - a rate determiner that determines the time-scale modification playback rate over an interval to control an amount of data in the buffer; and
 - a user interface which receives a user requested time-scale modification
- 10 playback rate.
2. The client apparatus of claim 1 wherein the rate determiner determines the time-scale modification playback rate utilizing the user requested time-scale modification playback rate.
3. The client apparatus of claim 2 wherein the user interface further
- 15 comprises a graphical interface.
4. The client apparatus of claim 3 wherein the graphical interface further displays one or more of the user requested time-scale modification playback rate, and the time-scale modification playback rate.
5. The client apparatus of claim 5 wherein the graphical interface
- 20 further displays a range of time-scale modification playback rates which are determined to provide uninterrupted playback.
6. The client apparatus of claim 1 wherein the rate determiner determines the time-scale modification playback rate as a non-linear function of the amount of data.
- 25 7. A method for preparing streaming media received over a non-deterministic delay network at a client device for playback or distribution which comprises the steps of:
 - receiving the streaming media at the client device;
 - determining a measure of an arrival rate and a measure of a data
- 30 consumption rate of the received streaming media;

determining a measure of mismatch between the arrival measure and the consumption measure; and

utilizing time-scale modification to mitigate the effects of the mismatch; wherein:

5 the arrival measure is determined as a function of an arrival rate of data in a buffer; and

the consumption measure is determined as a function of a use rate of data by a playback system or a distribution system.

8. A method for preparing streaming media received over a non-

10 deterministic delay network at a client device for playback or distribution which comprises the steps of:

receiving the streaming media at the client device;

determining a measure of an arrival rate and a measure of a data consumption rate of the received streaming media;

15 determining a measure of mismatch between the arrival measure and the consumption measure; and

utilizing time-scale modification to mitigate the effects of the mismatch;

wherein the arrival rate is determined using time-stamps for arriving data.

9. A method for preparing streaming media received over a non-

20 deterministic delay network at a client device for playback or distribution which comprises the steps of:

receiving the streaming media at the client device;

determining a measure of an arrival rate and a measure of a data consumption rate of the received streaming media;

25 determining a measure of mismatch between the arrival measure and the consumption measure; and

utilizing time-scale modification to mitigate the effects of the mismatch;

wherein the arrival rate is determined by monitoring data arrival times and data packet sizes.

30 10. A method for playback of streaming media received over a non-deterministic delay network at a client device which comprises steps of:

receiving the streaming media at the client device in a buffer;
playing back the streaming media;
determining a measure of an arrival rate and a measure of a data consumption rate of the received streaming media;

5 determining a time-scale modification playback rate considering one or more of the measure of arrival rate, the measure of a data consumption rate, and user input time-scale modification playback rate requests;

utilizing time-scale modification to mitigate underflow or overflow in the buffer, or disruption in playback; and

10 providing an indication of a current time-scale modification playback rate to the user.

11. The method of claim 10 which further comprises steps of:
providing an indication of a user requested time-scale modification playback rate.

15 12. The method of claim 10 wherein the step of playing back comprises associating a time-scale modification playback rate with each entry in a playback buffer queue.

13. The method of claim 10 wherein the indication comprises a function of recent time-scale modification playback rates.

20 14. The method of claim 10 wherein the step of utilizing comprising ignoring or modifying the user input time-scale modification playback rate when it would interfere with providing continuous playback.

15. A method for preparing streaming media received over a non-deterministic delay network at a client device for playback or distribution which comprises

25 the steps of:

receiving the streaming media at the client device;
determining a measure of an arrival rate and a measure of a data consumption rate of the received streaming media;
determining a measure of mismatch between the arrival measure and the

30 consumption measure; and
utilizing time-scale modification to mitigate the effects of the mismatch;

wherein the step of utilizing comprises determining a maximum time-scale modification playback rate that can be used over a reporting time interval without draining a buffer that receives the streaming media.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein the maximum time-scale modification playback rate is determined as a function of the arrival measure, the consumption measure, an amount of data in the buffer, and the time interval.
17. A method for preparing streaming media received over a non-deterministic delay network at a client device for playback or distribution which comprises the steps of:
 - 10 receiving the streaming media at the client device;
 - determining a measure of an arrival rate and a measure of a data consumption rate of the received streaming media;
 - determining a measure of mismatch between the arrival measure and the consumption measure; and
 - 15 utilizing time-scale modification to mitigate the effects of the mismatch; wherein the step of utilizing comprises determining a minimum time-scale modification playback rate that can be used over a reporting time interval without overflowing a buffer that receives the streaming media; wherein the minimum time-scale modification playback rate is determined as a function of the arrival measure, the consumption measure, an amount of data in the buffer, and the time interval.
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18. A method for playback of streaming media received over a non-deterministic delay network at a client device which comprises steps of:
 - receiving the streaming media at the client device, which client device includes a CPU;
 - 25 playing back the streaming media;
 - determining a measure of CPU availability;
 - determining a time-scale modification playback rate as a function of the measure of CPU availability; and
 - utilizing time-scale modification to prepare the streaming media for
 - 30 playback.